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Col. Martha McSally's War

By Lenni Brenner

They don't come more patriotic and more Christian than Lt. Col. Martha McSally, 36, America's first woman combat fighter-pilot, in 1995 over Iraq. Now she's fighting two wars. She's a grunt in Bush's Middle East "crusade", and she's fighting his Pentagon in the courts. Is Bush's holiest of all wars going well or badly? That's hard to say. But there's no question that she's beating the hell out of her fellow Texan.

In 1995, the local Air Force Commander bought neck-to-toe Muslim abayas, and ordered all women military traveling off duty in Saudi Arabia to wear them. They were also to carry scarves, to be "immediately worn if requested by the host nation people". They were forbidden to drive; had to be accompanied by a male; had to sit in the back seat of any vehicle containing more than two passengers.

Men were allowed jeans, but could not expose crucifixes or Christian tattoos, and were forbidden to wear Islamic "host nation attire, specifically including the thobe or long robe, or the gutra or headdress".

If Saudi Arabia is not quite a role model for 'the free world', it is a firm believer in faith-based family values, so taking photos "depicting... scenes of public punishment", meaning floggings, chopping off thieves' hands, and beheadings of gays, meant a court martial.

Starting in 1995, McSally, the AF's female publicity star, fought the order within the chain of command. She even unsuccessfully tried to bring the issue to William Perry, Secretary of Defense in Clinton's cabinet. And, sure enough, she was personally stationed at Prince Sultan Air Force Base from November 2000 to December 2001. She was talked out of immediately disobeying the abaya requirement: "It would torch her career and change nothing. Go. Change the order from within." But finally backed by John Whitehead and the Rutherford Institute, took Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to Court. After 9/11, with its cast of Saudi fanatics, the media gave huge attention to the suit, and Bush ran for cover. Uncle Sam continues to purchase the Muslim clothing, but the language about women wearing it was changed from "mandatory" to "strongly encouraged".

Colonel McSally and Whitehead are underwhelmed. The suit continues, now also charging the Pentagon with retaliatory treatment toward McSally. For the first time, her performance review was less than favorable, and her superiors refused to recommend her for a command position. But religious freedom and gender equality, not career concerns, motivate this determined warrior. An officer on base TV, "strongly" encouraging wearing abayas, will intimidate young women, who don't want to be put on the Air Force's shit list. Rosa Parks said no to segregation. Martha McSally will do no less.

Who thought up mandatory abayas? McSally says base staff told her it came from "way above our pay grade, it's a State Department thing". But that's what they always say. Indeed State Department women, and wives of male military, were never required to wear the robes. And the Saudis say they didn't ask for the order. If the court allows the suit to continue, whodunnit will come out in legal "discovery", but there can be no doubt what inspired it.

Pious Muslims bow five times a day towards Mecca. But Wall Street bows 50 (**McSally** *continued on page 6)*

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Our Little Secrets

Hurrah for Abboud!

Below is a short interview Fox News recently conducted with the Lebanese ambassador in the US. CounterPunch reckons it gives us all a lesson in how to deal with the media.

1) Never be in a defensive or apologetic situation.

2) You don't have to answer to every question they ask, because usually they try to put what they want in your mouth. It is not a Q&A session!

3) Use the few seconds they give you for YOU to deliver YOUR message rather than falling into the trap of answering them as they wish. Just read below and we're sure you will appreciate the way the 1-minute interview has been handled:

Fox Interviewer: Mr. Ambassador, do you consider Hizbollah a terrorist organization ?

Abboud: Yes, Sharon is a terrorist !

Fox: Mr. Ambassador, this was not my question. I asked you about the operations of Hizbollah in the targeting and killing of innocent civilians. How do you view Hizbollah ?

Abboud: Yes, Sharon the terrorist has killed thousands upon thousands of civilians. He is the biggest terrorist out there !

Fox: Mr. Ambassador. Please answer my question. Do you consider Hizbollah a terrorist organization or not ??? Are you against the killing of innocent civilians ?!

Abboud: Of course I am against the killing of innocent civilians. You have to define who the innocent civilians are. Sharon, the terrorist has killed many thousands upon thousands of innocent civilians and he is continuing to do so!

Fox: But what about Hizbollah ? Are you telling us that Hizbollah never killed any civilians or plotted to kill any innocent civilians ?

Abboud: Hizbollah is a resistance movement. They have a place in the Lebanese parliament and they are fighting for justice and for a good cause. If there were innocent civilians hurt in the process, they are a casualty of war. Hizbollah does not target civilians on purpose, unlike the war monger, Sharon, whose only targets have been civilians, including children !!!

Fox: Mr. Ambassador, does this mean you condone the suicide bombers ?!

Abboud: I do not condone the actions of the war criminal Sharon !!!

Fox (with apparent frustration): Mr. Ambassador, please stop evading my questions and answer them directly ! Do you condone the suicide bombers ?!

Abboud: I do not condone the killing of innocent civilians, but we have to define who is an innocent civilian and who is not !!! If a Palestinian suicide bomber kills a bunch of Israeli soldiers who are committing atrocities against the defenseless Palestinian population, do you consider these soldiers as innocent civilians ???

Fox (sighing): Mr. Abboud, do you recognize Israel's right to exist ?

Abboud: Yes, I recognize PALESTINE'S right to exist !!!

Fox (no words to describe his face): Mr. Ambassador. Please stop this aversion in answering, and answer our specific questions! Do you recognize Israel's right to exist or not ?!

Abboud: Israel already exists sir. It does not need my recognition. It is the recognition of Palestine to exist that should be addressed !!!

Fox: Mr. Ambassador, why are you so one sided and biased in answering our questions ???

Abboud: Sir, it is you who is very one-sided and biased in your questioning!!!

Fox (totally at a loss of words): Mr. Abboud, Lebanese Ambassador to the United States, thank you sir for your time and the interview !!!

Editors
Alexander Cockburn
Jeffrey St. Clair

Business
Becky Grant (Manager)
Anna Amezcua

Design
Deborah Thomas

Counselor
Ben Sonnenberg

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CounterPunch
PO Box 228
Petrolia, CA 95558
1-800-840-3683 (phone)
counterpunch@counterpunch.org
www.counterpunch.org

Poor Venezuelans Prefer Chavez to Times

By Justin Delcour

One would be hard-pressed to find an event in recent history during which the corporate American media provided as poor coverage as they did during the failed coup against Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. In countless reports and editorials, American newspapers recycled the same lies endlessly, most notably that Chávez had resigned following the violent deaths of pro and anti-Chávez demonstrators outside the Miraflores Presidential Palace in Caracas.

In fact the popularly-elected president had never resigned and that his ouster had the clear markings of a coup d'etat, with $100,000 disbursements from Uncle Sam to the contrivers of the failed coup. Likewise, the mainstream press unquestioningly repeated the claims of the coup leaders that Chávez was responsible for the deaths of demonstrators, ignoring reports from alternative media that pro-Chávez demonstrators were the first to be shot. But another flaw in U.S. reporting that has gone relatively unnoticed is that there has been little explanation as to why hundreds of thousands of poor Venezuelans came to their president's defense in the face of the coup.

According to the vast majority of press accounts, Chávez has failed to fulfill his promise of reducing poverty in his country. As one New York Times editorial put it, "Mr. Chávez was elected president in 1998 promising change he never delivered". Yet even the mainstream press could not ignore the huge throngs of poor Venezuelans which massed in Caracas in Chávez's defense. Why did they rally?

The truth is that the Chávez Government has brought about tangible gains for many poor Venezuelans. Greg Wilpert, a former U.S. Fulbright scholar in Venezuela who is currently doing independent research on the sociology of development, has pointed out

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that Chávez has used increased revenue from oil sales and improved tax collection to expand social spending for the poor.

Among the policies that Chávez has introduced are fundamental land reform, the expansion of education for the poor, the regulation of the informal economy so as to reduce the insecurity of the poor, and a large-scale micro-credit program for the poor and for women. Official unemployment in Venezuela has declined from 18 per cent to 13 per cent. Under Chávez, health care coverage for the poor has been expanded and infant mortality has declined.

Contrary to popular belief, Chávez doesn't neatly fit into the traditional populist mold. For years, neoliberal economists have been accusing Latin American populists of not concentrating social spending on the truly poor. Instead, they say, populists redistribute income to middle class sectors through policies such as subsidized higher education (to which the poor do not generally have access) and subsidized public utilities (which are of no help to those among the poor who have no access to public utilities). Chávez, however, does seem to direct social spending toward the poor. His main constituency is informal sector workers, which is a huge constituency in Venezuela and one in which poverty is heavily concentrated.

Of course, we won't see any neoliberal economists coming to the defense of Chávez for his efforts to help the truly poor. Rather, those economists and the whole neoliberal establishment seem quite disturbed about the fact that Chávez has tapped into the poor masses of his country and can draw upon their support in the event of a right-wing counter-attack.

Justin Delacour is a Latin America solidarity activist and graduate student of Latin American Studies at the University of New Mexico. He can be reached at: jdelac@unm.edu

From Alabama to Austin
By Alexander Cockburn

Birmingham: Kathy Johnson and Dave Gesspass, stalwart outposts of the National Lawyers' Guild, take me to Dreamland, promoting it as homeport for some of Alabama's best barbecue. The pork ribs are succulent. I report as much to friends in the Pacific northwest, and receive an emailed warning from Dave Vest, member of the region's hottest blues band , the Cannonballs. Dave once lived in the south and toured with Tammy Wynette in the early years. He warns that Cockburn "will observe a steady decline in the quality of the bbq as he travels west. In Texas they will feed him saddle leather with ketchup on it. The Amoco station in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, will probably be his last chance for a decent bag of boiled peanuts."

Travel tips from musicians are always worthwhile. Vest advised that "If you cross the Atchafalaya Swamp on I-10, pull off at Henderson. The big service station there is the one where Jerry Lee Lewis got mad because they were selling pirated cassettes and carried the entire tape display out by the pumps, poured gas on it, and lit it. The station manager said 'Jesus Christ what will I tell the distributor?' Lewis, walking to his bus, said, 'Tell him the killer was here.' I have this from Robbie Parrish. He toured with Carl Perkins, too. Anyway, out behind the execrable Landry's restaurant, there's a shed that used to sell decent catfish po-boys." This kind of expertise should be built, piece by piece, into America's answer to the Odyssey.

Ratios in Texas in 1880 were 111 men to one woman. Same ratio ten years later. Conditions in the bunkhouses must have been similar to those before the mast.

The next morning Kathy Johnson takes me on a tour of Birmingham: the famous Baptist Church on 16th St where the recently convicted bomber killed the four young black women in the 1960s; the wonderful Civil Rights museum; and the Birmingham Art Museum, which has some fine paintings including an odd Benjamin West, a good Courbet. There was a striking painting from the dawn of abstract impressionism by Alfred Leslie (born 1927) called "A Survivor" painted in 1951 and donated recently by Mr and Mrs Michael Strauss to the museum in honor of the victims and survivors of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Moundville

While I'm driving, Ben Sonnenberg calls on my cellphone from New York, sobbing with emotion at the obsequies for the Queen Mother. He tells me this is the sort of thing the British do so well. I respond that when that my grandfather Jack Arbuthnot, when he was in the Scots Guards, used to do guard duty at Balmoral and when the Queen Mother visited as a little girl from Glamis Castle, she'd ride around the drawing room on his shoulders. These days Major Jack would probably be cashiered for child abuse.

At Tuscaloosa I turn south down 68 to Moundville, site of the amazing mounds raised by Indians sometime in the thirteenth century, probably after a traveller returned from the Yucatan with news of the latest architectural styles down south. Viewing the substantial amounts of dirt shovelled up into these mounds it's hard to maintain any Rousseauian fanatasies about class equality among the Indians of that time.

I check into a motel outside Meridian, hometown of Jimmy Rodgers, and take a look at e-traffic . The Trilateral Commission is in executive session. The Washington Times runs a silly piece where the reporter pours scorn on those, mostly right-wing populists, which denounce it as "Secret World Government". Without irony, the reporter notes that among those attending are 250 political and business "leaders" from around the world, with the US fielding a strong team including Cheney, Rumsfeld, Powell, Greenspan and Paul Volcker. Absent a few Chinese trillionaires too busy consulting their astrologers to attend, this sounds like World Government to me.

Welty and the WPA

I've been in some empty downtowns in regional America, but Jackson on a Saturday morning is the deadest I've ever seen. Eventually I find local rancher kids exhibiting their Palominos in the fairgrounds and a vast flea market next door, also barely populated. I buy an old 30-gallon iron cookpot for $120, for CounterPunch New Year gumbo parties (book now).

I am able to continue to enjoy art in the WPA tradition. The local museum in Jackson, thermostat set to a punishing chill on a fresh day, has an exhibition of 1930s

(**OLS** *continued on page 5)*

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A CounterPunch Bulletin

Set This Flag on Fire!

For the last 50 years, the state of South Carolina has flown the Confederate flag above the grounds of the state capitol in Columbia.

The flag was hoisted in 1962 as a show of defiance against the Supreme Court and the Civil Rights movement. It soon became a war banner for the segregationists marshaled behind Strom Thurmond's Southern Manifesto. The flag has remained a shameful glorification of the ante-bellum, slave-holding South and a daily blight for South Carolina's black population ever since.

Recall that South Carolina was not only the ignition point for the Civil War, but the Wal-Mart of the slave trade. Many of the black Africans brought to South Carolina as slaves for the plantation owners were sent into the swampy rice fields, which proved to be malarial death camps, where people perished in scarcely imaginable numbers. Nearly two-thirds of the black children in the rice plantations perished before reaching the age of sixteen.

Black Africans who weren't forced into the rice and cotton fields of South Carolina (the Carolina planters exhibited a preference for blacks from Senegambia and present-day Ghana) were sold in Charleston's slave market to plantation owners from across the South. These brokers of human beings ended up making millions and enjoying seats as legislators in the statehouse, where they drafted laws to protect their "property". When people talk about the flag as a proud symbol of the state's heritage that's the inescapable and horrible background.

For the past couple of years, the NAACP and local civil rights organizers, including CounterPunch writer Kevin Alexander Gray, have led a campaign to get the flag removed from atop the capitol building and transferred to a display case in a nearby museum, which houses artifacts from what is politely referred to in Carolina as "the war between the states".

When first broached, the demand was met with derision by state leaders and threats of violence from local roughnecks. Then the civil rights groups launched a nationwide tourism boycott of the South Carolina. This was no minor threat. Since the NAFTA-driven collapse of the garment industry, tourism (which consists largely of the promotion of the Southern plantation lifestyle) has become a mainstay of the state's frail economy. Soon millions were being lost and businesses (which once not so long ago proudly catered only to whites by law and now do so largely based on pricing) started carping to legislators about what could be done to deal with the noisome boycott.

Ultimately, a compromise plan was brokered by Democrats in the state legislature and the flag migrated from the capitol dome to a prominent flagpole on the statehouse grounds, where it flies above statues of Confederate soldiers and generals. Naturally, this satisfied few in the civil rights community and the NAACP boycott remains in place.

Last Wednesday morning, black activist and brick mason Emmett Rufus Eddy decided that he had had enough of this ongoing insult and did something about it. Eddy had tried to pull the flag down on three previous occasions. Even though a restraining order barred him from stepping foot on the grounds of the Statehouse, this time Eddy would succeed.

"Anybody down there can promise me that this flag will not go back up until my trial?" Eddy asked. "Can anybody make that promise?"

Assuming the guise of his nom de guerre, the Reverend E. Slave, Eddy donned a black Santa suit, carried a ladder bearing the names of black rights organizers to the South Carolina State House, set it up next to the flagpole, climbed to the top of the flagpole, cut down the Confederate flag, shouted "this is for the children, and lit it on fire, as state police heckled him from below and tried to douse him with pepper spray.

Apparently, the study of physics and Newton's law of gravity are not requirements at the police academy in Columbia and the cops were duly surprised when the pepper spray failed to incapacitate the Reverend Slave and instead blew back into the eyes of the police officers. The officers later filed injury claims.

Eddy clung to the pole, telling his pursuers: "Anybody down there can promise me that this flag will not go back up until my trial?" Eddy asked. "Anybody can make that promise? Make that promise and I'll come down."

In South Carolina, old times are not forgotten. The local paper reported the comments of a passing motorist as police tried to pull Eddy down: "String him up right there." (For the record, there were at least 145 lynchings of blacks by white mobs in South Carolina from 1882 to 1930, according to the excellent A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings by Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck.)

Eventually, Eddy was arrested, roughed up a little by the embarrassed cops, shackled and hauled off to jail, to the taunts and jeers from a crowd of more than 100 (mostly white) onlookers who had gathered at the site. Within the hour, the Statehouse's grounds crew secured another Confederate flag (value: $30) and hoisted the infamous banner once again.

The flag may only cost $30 to replace, but the State of South Carolina is determined to impose a much more severe sanction on Eddy. For this modest act of civil disobedience (which some might call a beautification project), Eddy faces a $5,000 fine and three years in prison.

The Reverend Slave was bailed out, but a few days later he was arrested again, supposedly for trespassing on the statehouse grounds, although he was across the street at the time. He peacefully resisted by laying down on the sidewalk and going limp, as the cops dragged him back to jail.

Eddy needs our help and, god knows, the people of South Carolina need his. Fortunately, Eddy's got two good lawyers Milton Kimpson and CounterPunch contributor and civil rights attorney Tom Turnipseed. Please send what you can to Eddy's legal defense fund at: E. Slave Defense Fund, P.O. Box 4681 Columbia, SC 29240. CP

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work by Eudora Welty and others, though sadly none of the 3,000 color photographs taken by the Farm Security Administration photographers (Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange and others) in the late 1930s which I always feel probably present a more animated profile of rural America in the Depression than the relentlessly gloomy pictures of downhearted Okies in which Evans and Lange specialized.

Huntsville's Chair

I forge on to Huntsville, Texas, end of the line for Karla Faye Tucker and many others. The woman at the Holiday Inn gives me a guide to the town's carceral amenities. I drive round the prison, which once housed John Wesley Hardin (allegedly slayer of 44, pardoned and ultimately a lawyer in El Paso)and end up in the Prison Museum behind the Court House. Here I view Old Sparky, a fine specimen of the joiner's art put together by an inmate himself convicted of murder and sentenced to die in 1914, though later spared and ultimately released.

Old Sparky, also known as the Texas Thunderbolt was the final seat of 361 men and women between 1924 and 1964. A helpful note advises that the executioner would throw a switch and put 2000 volts, producing 8 to 10 amps, through his victim, thus rendering the condemned person unconscious "almost immediately". After three to four seconds the executioner would ease off the current to 500 to 1000 volts for one minute, maintaining paralysis of the brain and other vital organs but preventing the body from bursting into flames.

That explains why at least one execution in the Florida death house a couple of years back was marred by flames enveloping the dead man's head. The old craft skills have died out. Young executioners these days just don't care.

In the Huntsville Museum, not far from George W. Bush's statement refusing to commute Karla Faye's death sentence, along with her lawyer's plea for life, there's a peremptory note about his last meal from one condemned man, J. Morrow Jr: "1 small steak (tender, no bone, no fat, cooked rare-medium)." After other items including three bananas and a pint of chocolate ice cream Morrow notes, "This is my last meal, and damn it, I want it served hot on however many plates and bowls it takes from mixing it up together."

From the museum I go in search of a mural of one of Huntsville's better known inmates, Huddie Ledbetter (aka, Leadbelly). It's billed as being on the front of a commercial building on the 2100 block of Sam Houston Avenue, but seems to have made way for a fast food joint. I eat a really bad barbecue plate, confirming all Dave Vest's direst predictions, and head west.

George Sr.'s Idea of a Really good Joke

I roll into Austin,a town that has gotten larger but not otherwise improved since the last time I was there a decade or so ago. Within 24 hours I'm at a Willie Nelson concert at the Backyard, an arena a few miles outside the town. We miss the opening act and then, without much ado, Willie and band come on and start twanging away. They're awful, out of key and sync, all over the map and held together only by the pianist, member (I think) of the Nelson clan. I reckon the evening is doomed. Fortunately there's a full bar. Then, in about half an hour it all comes together and Nelson and band give of their impressive best for the next 90 minutes.

Laconically he announces they'll play a "couple for Waylon", then he unveiles a few songs from his recent CDs and some long love songs which come mostly in the form of apologies. Comely women in the front row toss things up to him. I can't see whether they're knickers. He throws back hats and headbands. We leave, very well satisfied amid a crowd of mostly 30 to 50-year olds, all white as one might expect.

Next day I seek out my old friend Bill Broyles, once editor of Texas Monthly, then a Marine in Vietnam, then editor of Newsweek until he and Katharine Graham wearied of each other. These days Bill who once wrote a fine memoir about Vietnam, writes successful scripts for Hollywood like the recent Castaway and upcoming Unfaithful . His house downtown has pillars and I told him I thought it was a bank. He answered equably enough that the bank owned it and was soon reminiscing about his Newsweek days. Early in his editorial tenure he was scheduled to meet vice president George Bush. But Bush's office told Broyles the vice president had to go off to the airport to welcomed new Soviet president Yuri Andropov. So Bill would have to meet Bush on the latter's way back from this historic encounter with the KGB veteran.

Of course Bill hoped for newsworthy insights about the mysterious Andropov. Bush greeted him excitedly, crying out that he'd "just heard a terrific joke. What's Irish and lies around in the sun all day?" Bill allowed as how he didn't know. Bush doubled up with merriment. Finally, mopping tears of laughter from his eyes, the vice president gasped, "Paddy O'Furniture".

I told Bill of the barbecue wars and the views of such qualified connoisseurs as Dave Vest that Texas bbq is like saddle leather with ketchup on it. Bill fought back gamely.

"I do admit that it is possible for there to be decent barbecue east of the Sabine River. Even a blind pig finds a truffle once on a blue moon. One general rule is, the bigger the city, the worse the barbecue. The best places here are Kreuz's market in Lockhart and Louie Mueller's in Taylor. In Austin Stubbs is in a class by itself: waitresses in tattoos, lip rings and purple hair not generally being a good sign in a barbecue place."

I said we should finish our lunch, then go to Stubbs that very night, in the company of Bill's striking wife Andrea, a sculptor. Bill said fine, then paused and muttered, "Or do you want a really good meal". Kind of gave the game away in my opinion. So we went to Jeffrey's, not far from where he lived, billed as George W's favorite eating spot. An outlier of Jeffrey's has been established in DC so that W. can feel at home. CP

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times a minute towards the Saudi oilfields. The US military is there to protect the circa 3,000-strong dynasty, half sincere homicidal fundamentalists, half whiskey-drinking con artists, which the State Department prefers to any secular pan-Arab nationalist, Marxist or Islamic fundamentalist alternative. Military tops are selected for willingness to carry out Washington's politics. Whether the initial order came from State, or Clinton's civilian Secretary of Defense, or from one of their overzealous uniformed toadies, "trying to please his local counterparts", as the Colonel suggests as among the possibilities, is incidental.

Lie down with dogs, rise up with fleas. Once official America became a pit bull, ready to sacrifice the life of McSally and her comrades in arms, guarding an absolute monarchist religious fanatic, it was scarcely out of character for it to take a bite out of the rights of its own soldiery, to please that foreign despot.

Is the Colonel learning politically from her ordeal? An officer is required to be restrained in her political statements. But McSally is a lawyer's daughter and, if not literally a rocket scientist, she is a jet pilot, fully capable of learning from experience. When she went public, the Institute wrote Laura Bush in a plea for support. "I honestly felt that once it became very public, that President Bush, Mrs. Bush or Secretary Rumsfeld... somebody, would step up at some point and say 'this is ridiculous, get rid of the thing.'" Not any more.

"I have to watch myself, making comments about our international agreements as an officer, so I can't speak as freely as I would like, but people... would say, 'well, we're not there defending them. We are there defending our national security interests. It's got nothing to do with them... We just need to do whatever it takes to stay there.' From my perspective... I look at the way the women in Saudi Arabia are treated, and it's not too far off from the way the women of Afghanistan were treated under the Taliban.... For those who would argue that we don't need to impose our way of life on people. OK, fine. But we certainly shouldn't impose their way of life on us."

"I look at the way the women in Saudi Arabia are treated, and it's not too far from the way Afghan women were treated by the Taliban."

And when an American woman refuses to sit in the back of the car, she has before her the example of another woman, who wouldn't sit in the back of the bus. How much more she will learn depends on how the powers-that-be and their domestic critics relate in practice, not in words, to religious freedom and female equality.

Did the Air Force chaplains help her? "I have received a lot of private support.... It's tough for them to come right out with some official letter".

Five Republican senators, including Jesse Helms, tried early on to get Bush to end the madness. After she got huge media publicity, Kennedy and some Democrats made sounds. But Hillary? "I personally haven't heard from her, or heard of anything she's done".

National Organization for Women? Vice President Karen Johnson, herself a retired Air Force Lt. Colonel, "expressed hope" that the Air force would renounce its "separate but not equal" policy. After all, "The US has influence in Saudi Arabia that it has been unwilling to use". Johnson declared that "There is no reason for the Pentagon to order US military women to abide by the rules of a Middle Eastern country in which women are not allowed to drive cars or vote. Discrimination against women serving their country is insulting and intolerable".

Not one word here about there being no legitimate "reason for the Pentagon to order US military women to" kill or be killed defending "a Middle Eastern country in which women are not allowed to drive cars or vote".

After 9/11, McSally, and every politically thinking American, has no choice but to confront one overriding question: What did your military, party, movement, journal or whatever, say and do before that date about US patronage of Islamic fundamentalism, be it in Afghanistan or its Saudi breeding ground?

Because those institutions which failed then, will, with certainty, yet again betray, by commission or omission or both, the rights of women, in Afghanistan, in Saudi Arabia and America. Martha McSally is now inscribed in the progressive history of humanity, like her role model, Rosa Parks. CP

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Three Years for Hauling Down Flag? They're Serious.

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